in reducing us to the defensive. This, coupled with the fact that the enemy forces are now more numerous than ever before, that they have conquered large parts of Entente territory, *Inaction spells defeat* which they are still holding, and that the submarine campaign, already so grave, is growing in violence, would look very much like our defeat, would dishearten all the Entente nations, whose discouragement might precipitate serious peace movements among one or more of them. And once the rot sets in, it might be difficult to stop it. No doubt the weight of America would be felt in 1918, but the danger is that we may not get there unless active operations are prosecuted, and a continuance of military success buoys up the spirit of the nations to fight on till America can come in as a decisive factor.[5]

8. If it should prove that we cannot persuade the French to fight, or if they agree to fight but we are not adequately satisfied that they really mean to do so and to the full extent of their power, we should as a *pis-aller* insist on their taking over a large part of our front and should continue our preparations for attacking

Doubts about Flanders offensive

in Belgium. I am by no means prepared to recommend now that that operation should be carried out if the French do nothing and if as many German troops are on

the Western Front as are there now, as I doubt if it would be feasible in these circumstances.*
But it is very important that it should be undertaken

* The opinions expressed by the C.I.G.S. in this paragraph are quite inconsistent with the attitude he adopted in June when the question of a tremendous offensive to clear the Belgian coast was discerned and determined.